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RECENT ACCESSIONS

AERICAN PORTRAITS.—Mr. Sylvester Dering of Utica has given to the Museum five of his family portraits, which are now shown in the Room of Recent Accessions. These include three pictures by Blackburn, two of which are in oil and one in pastel, and two by Daniel Huntington. The colonial works are especially important to our collection, as the Museum has not hitherto owned any examples by Blackburn, though through the kindness of Mr. Richard C. Greenleaf, we have been enabled to show two of his paintings for the last three years. The originals of the Dering Blackburns are Margaret Sylvester,¹ wife of David Chesebrough, daughter of Brinley Sylvester of Shelter Island; Mary Sylvester,² wife of Thomas Dering, sister of Margaret Sylvester Chesebrough; Thomas Dering,³ of Boston, husband of Mary Sylvester Dering, whose portrait was done in pastels. All of these portraits were painted in 1754. The pictures by Daniel Huntington are the portraits of Ella Virginia Bristol,⁴ wife of Sylvester Dering, daughter of Willis Bristol of New Haven, Conn., painted in 1878, and of Nicoll Havens Dering,⁵ son of Sylvester and Ella V. Dering, painted in 1870.

B. B.

A PICTURE BY THOMAS EAKINS.—Pushing for Rail is the title given to a picture by Thomas Eakins, signed and dated 1874, which has been lately purchased out of the Arthur Hoppock Hearn Fund and is now shown in the Room of Recent Accessions. This title is the name given by sportsmen to a method of hunting rail, a kind of water-bird. The hunter is punted along the

shallow waters of marsh streams and shoots at the birds as they fly on being disturbed. This is the subject of the picture. The water in which the boats are floating is hidden from sight by the grasses and weeds, which indeed hide almost all of the boats themselves, the three hunters, each with his boatman, appearing above them.

It is a small picture⁶ and the figures are at most three inches high, yet no detail of their appearance has been slighted; each peculiarity of person or costume has been scrupulously recorded. The aim of the painter is plain. He has set down each fact of the scene in the most certain way and his success is remarkable. One cannot fail to be impressed by the straightforwardness of his workmanship and the keenness of his observation. His interest has noted everything. The folds of the much-worn clothes, a red and white checked shirt, a bandana handkerchief, a straw or felt hat, the pose of a man firing, his intentness on the loading of his gun, a flying bird, the blur of the far-away trees and sail-boats seen across a marsh on a hot day, the looseness of the weeds in the foreground—all these and more he has registered in a sort of Walt Whitman fashion in a picture which in its sincerity and impersonality recalls certain of the little masters of Holland of the seventeenth century.

Thomas Eakins was born in 1844 and studied under Gérôme. The direction which his work has taken was evident early in his career and he has never departed from it. Untouched by the shifting aesthetic fashions, his pictures, when they are shown in the exhibitions, are invariably prominent on account of their manliness and single-minded sincerity. The Museum already owns one picture by him, *The Chess Players*, painted in 1876, a gift of the artist in 1881.

B. B.

⁶ Canvas: H. 13 in.; W. 30 $\frac{1}{8}$ in.

¹ Canvas: H. 49 $\frac{7}{8}$ in.; W. 40 $\frac{1}{8}$ in.

² Canvas: H. 49 $\frac{7}{8}$ in.; W. 40 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.

³ Canvas: H. 22 $\frac{1}{8}$ in.; W. 17 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.

⁴ Canvas: H. 30 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.; W. 25 in.

⁵ Canvas: H. 30 in.; W. 25 in.

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PORTRAIT OF MARGARET SYLVESTER CHESEBROUGH
BY JONATHAN B. BLACKBURN

BULLETIN OF THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

ANOTHER ADDITION TO THE SPANISH ALTARPIECE.—Through the gift of Émile Pares, the Museum has acquired a small figure of Saint Paul in alabaster, which is a fragment from the splendid Spanish altarpiece in the Wing of Decorative Arts,

The figure of Saint Paul is represented preaching to the people gathered around him, while Saint Thecla listens from a window. The newly acquired fragment, added to the two lower panels which the Museum was fortunate enough to secure



PORTRAIT OF MARY SYLVESTER DERING
BY JONATHAN B. BLACKBURN

given by J. Pierpont Morgan in 1909, and catalogued as number 101 in the Catalogue of Romanesque, Gothic, and Renaissance Sculpture. This half-length figure, which is now in place, completes the scene represented in the upper right-hand panel of the altarpiece, a relief representing an episode from the life of Saint Thecla of Iconium.

by purchase in 1914, completes the entire altarpiece as it stood before its removal from the Chapel of the Archiepiscopal Palace in Zaragoza, Spain. Various minor fragments are still missing, but these are evidently the result of old losses, so that it is very improbable that any further fragments will turn up.
W. M. M.